BAALBECK

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

LIBRAIRIE DE L'IMPRIMERIE CATHOLIQUE
BEYROUT

TRANSLATED BY

CHRISTO WIRWAKY

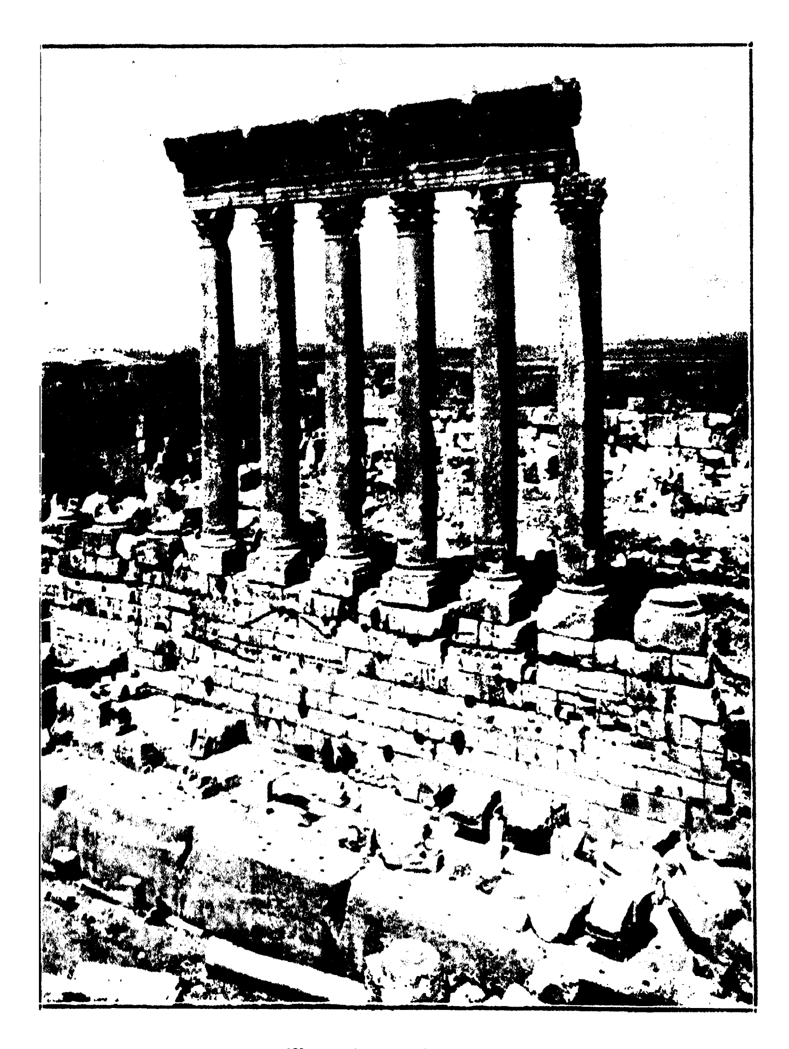
IMPRIMERIE CATHOLIQUE
BEYROUTH
1929

BAALBECK

The plain of Cœle-Syria, level as the water of a tranquil sea, and bare as a deserted beach, stretching without end between two chains of superb mountains, is a striking and unforgettable sight to the traveller from Beyrout to Baalbeck. This new horizon opens before his sight os soon as he leaves behind him the last hill of the Lebanon : speechless, he stops to contemplate and admire the picturesque scenery : he searches for Baalbeck with its immense and stupendous ruins, that provoked the most enthusiastic admiration, and the most poetical descriptions of his predecessors.

Only a dim speck at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon, in the distance where the plain disappears in a north-westerly direction, 40 kms. off, indicates the famous town.

Baalbeck, built at equal distances from both extremities of Cœle-Syria, has an altitude of ft. 3850, is seen from most parts of the plain, and from all the slopes of the Lebanon.



Temple of Jupiter

CHAPTER I

HISTORY

Baalbeck is the ancient Syrian name of *Be'elbeck*, which was revived by the Arabs. It signifies, in accordance with the opinion of some historians. « The Baal of the Valley » ; the termination « beck » represents an abbreviation of *bikaa*, meaning a valley. In the opinion of others, it signifies «The Town of Baal » ; the last syllable «beck» stands for the Egyptian word *baki*, meaning a town. The Greeks have translated this name into their language as Heliopolis, « The City of the Sun », as the god Baal and the god of the Sun correspond. There are antique inscriptions where Baal is called «Baal-Sun », for instance an inscription of Um-el-Awamid (1). It is probable that it was the Seleucide Princes, successors of Alexander the Great, who

(1) Renan, Mission de Phénicie, p. 711.

invented the word Baalbeck, just as they did for many localities of their Empire. The Romans also adopted the Greek name.

All that is known of the ancient history of Heliopolis concerns almost entirely the temples, which still give its celebrity today ; or, to the sacred edifices that preceded these temples.

Biblical Epoch. — The book of *De Dea Syra*, certainly prior to the building of the Roman temples, the ruins of which we now admire, says that the idol of the Sun was worshipped at Heliopolis in an ancient Egyptian temple, and the historian Macrobius (1) (5th century), gives the following story of how the idol of the Sun came from Egypt.

« Under the reign of Pharaon Senemure, an Assyrian lord called Opia, envoy of the king of his country, carried the idol in Assyria, accompanied by Egyptian priests whose chief was called Portemetis. The idol remained there for a long time and was afterwards transported to Heliopolis of Syria » (2).

That is all that the historians say about the Heliopolis prior to the Roman dominion. It is little.

Meanwhile, at the sight of the enormous stones of the holy precincts, many travellers have remem-

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(1) Chap. V.

(2) Saturn., L. I. C. 23.

bered the similar formation, though smaller, of the Temple in Jerusalem, attributed to Solomon, and many gave them the same origin of the enormous blocks of Baalbeck ; thus was established the belief in the country that both edifices were raised by Solomon.

If King Solomon has really constructed this edifice, temple or fort, whose prodigious stones are indestructible remnants, it is most astonishing that the Holy Scriptures have said nothing of this great work. Only if Baalbeck was in biblical times an important center of population, garnisons, or in the adorations of idolatry, it is extraordinary that this place, whose situation commands the whole plain of Cœle-Syria, is not mentioned in any of the historical books of the Old Testament.

No one doubts that the country of Baalbeck belonged to Solomon. He possessed the whole region on this side of the Euphrates, from Tapsha or Tapsacus, near Deir-ez-Zor on the Euphrates, as far as Gaza in Palestine (1). We know also that he did not leave any of his towns without defence.

« And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether, and Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land, and all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired

(1) I. Kings, IV, 24.

to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion » (1).

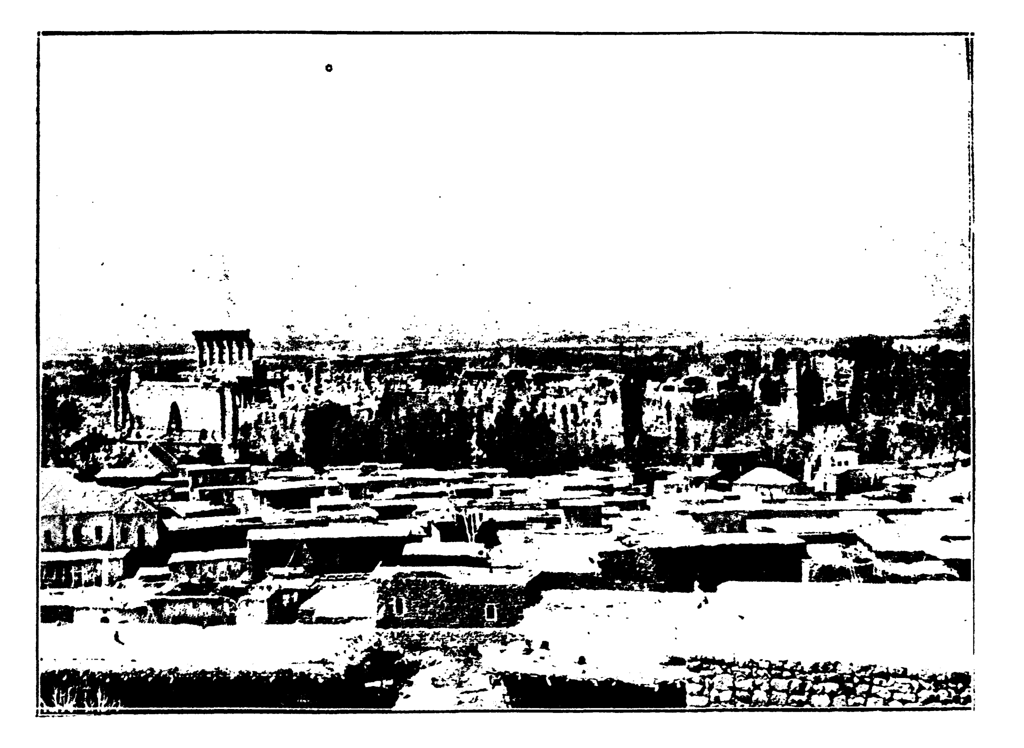
Is it not possible thad Baalbeck was Baalath ? The names resemble each other, and both of them indicate a town dedicated to the worship of Baal. The Scriptures seem to suggest that Baalath is located between Beth-horon and Palmyra, it is, in fact, the situation of Baalbeck (2). Further the political conditions in that time were in favour of such opinions. In that period the commercial relations of Palestine with the great bazaars of Thapsacus on the Euphrates were important, besides, that of Tyre with the Phœnician Colony of Nisibe, in Mesopotamia, were necessary. The caravans of Jerusalem and of Tyre had no shorter route than that by Damascus. Now it happened that under the reign of Solomon, the route of Damascus was closed in their face, as the king of Damascus, Adad, «was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon » (3). Under these circumstances they were compelled to follow the road through the valley of Cœle-Syria,

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(1) I. Kings IX, 17, 18, 19.

(2) It sounds more natural to see Baalbeck in place of Baalath in the Bible, instead of saying that the latter is the present Bel'ain, in the Mountains of Judea, 20 kms. E. of Ramleh, just as is assumed by Condor: Memoirs of the Survey of Western Palestine, I. II. p. 296.

(3) I. Kings XI. 25.



BAALBECK — Town and Acropolis

and in the interest of his subjects, and his ally King Hiram of Tyre, Solomon had to guarantee their safety by fortifying Baalbeck, the place of first importance in the valley for strategical purposes.

Other circumstances for other reasons may equally have attracted the attention of Solomon to Baalbeck. The Bible says that at the end of his life he bound his life to foreign wives and built temples for their gods (1). Among those idols was, without doubt, this Baal, whose worship was so profoundly rooted in the Land of Canaan that the children of Israel could not completely eradicate it from their land. This god, whom all the Syrio-Phœnician nations worshipped under different forms, was always accounted as the highest of all the gods. Baalbeck was then, as it is presumed, the principal home of its worship in Syria. From that, nothing is so natural as that Solomon, so fond of magnificent constructions, had thought of erecting a temple of Baal in Baalbeck, because of his desire to honour the gods of his wives.

These considerations take a new force when considered in the light of a text from the Prophet Amos who lived a few years after the rule of Solomon : « I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden :

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(1) I. Kings XI. 1-8.

and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the Lord » (1).

Calmet (2), Rosenmüller (3), Robinson (4), Grove (5), Wolf (6) and some others believe that the valley of Cœle-Syria is the valley of Aven ; and, Baalbeck and its temples are the house of voluptuousness.

All these reasonings only create a probability, and not a certainty, in history. In reality we ignore what was Baalbeck in biblical times, as we do know neither the period, nor the circumstances of its foundation. Does it owe its origin to a colony of some Phœnicians ? The chronicler Etienne de Byzance seems to hint at this idea when he calls it Heliopolis in Phœnicia, but others say, « Heliopolis in the Lebanon ».

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Roman Epoch. — Strabon (7) informs us that

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(1) Amos I, 5.

(2) Commentaire littéral sur les douze petits prophètes.

(3) Prophetæ Minores.

(4) Biblical Researches, I, III.

(5) In Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

(6) In Riehm, Handworterbuch des Biblischen Alterthums.

(7) L. XVI. CII, 10.

at the time of Pompey, Heliopolis, as well as the whole plain, was under the power of Ptolemy, son of Mennæus. When Pompey crossed Syria as a conqueror, writes Flavius Josephus (1), he submitted to his arms the country of this mischievous Ptolemy, who then obtained the pardon of the conqueror by paying him one thousand talents, which served him to pay his mercenaries.

A few years latter (47 B. C.), Julius Cæsar, in his rapid campaign into Syria overran Heliopolis in order to add it to his Empire. He then founded there a Roman colony after the name of his favourite daughter, Julia. Some coins of the first century, with the figure of a bull, emblem of the colony, and bearing the inscription C. J. A. F. H. (Colonia Juliæ, Augustæ, Felix, Heliopolitana) attest the fact.

The classical authors who speak of Heliopolis at that period, Strabon, Pline (2), Josephus and Ptolemy the geographer (3), do not point out any building that was particularly remarkable; whereas Ptolemy, who lived in the first half of the second century, mentions Heliopolis as the finest town in Cœle-Syria.

It was the Emperor Antoninus the Pious who erected the most ancient temple whose ruins we now

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(1) Antiq. Jud., L. XIV, c. 3.

(2) Hist. Nat., V. 18.

(3) V. 14.

admire. The chronicler John Malala, of Antioch, a writer of the 7th century (1), confirms it in the following terms, « The Emperor Ælius Antoninus Pius constructed here, in Heliopolis, which is a town of the Libanese Phœnecia, a great temple of Jupiter, and this temple must be counted among the wonders of the world ».

An inscription bears this out, repeated on two bases of columns that make part of the actual precincts of the temple, asserting that a high officer of the first legion, in concluding a vow to the gods of Heliopolis, at his own expense, gilded the brazen capitals of the two columns in honour of the victories of Antony the Pious, and of his mother Julia.

The successors of Antoninus completed and beautified his work, and erected other temples of no less splendour. The coins of those emperors preserve the souvenir and the image of the principal monuments which we owe to them. The coins of Septimus the Severe represent a periptery temple similar to that whose ruins now bear the name of the god Jupiter, with the inscription J. O. M. H. (Jovi Optimo, Maximo, Heliopolitano). Other coins of the same Emperor bear these words: Certamina, Sacra, Capitolina; pertaining to the games instituted in honour of Jupiter Capitolin, i, e., of Baal. A mint

(1) Chronogr., 366, dans la Patrol., gr. de Migne, T. XCVII.

of Caracalla (211-217) attests that this emperor constructed a rich perron, now disappeared, in front of the temple of Jupiter, which was greatly admired by contemporary travellers. The temple and the perron are represented as seen from the side and from the top. It is also a medal of Philippe the Father (244-249) that preserved the memory of a curvilinear staircase, erected by this Emperor in front of the great propylæa of the eastern precincts, but the ruins show no trace of it. Finally, a second medal of the same Emperor represents new embellishments by the appearence of a facade of a temple with pronaos and pediment.

Rome, as is known, was always anxious to draw to her the conquered nations by favouring their religion, and showed her desire by assimilating their worship and by finding counterparts to their gods among the Roman gods. She hoped to give an impression of her great power and remarkable genius by building splendid and imperishable edifices.

But, in the presence of the astounding ruins of the temples of Baalbeck, it would be doubted that such political views in general were reasonable in themselves as giving motive for the construction of these vast buildings in a conquered town of little importance. It was not the custom of the Roman emperors, conscious of their power, to make in their colonies such prodigious monuments out of all

proportions to their importance and to local conditions.

The unfinished sculptures of tbe temples remaining among the ruins of the Christian edifices, and their premature downfall, lead us to surmise that it was the last effort made by Paganism to preserve its kingdom when it felt the invasion of the new religion of the Crucified. Christianity penetrated into Heliopolis, and the bloody persecutions did not cause its progress to falter, and soon the name of the true God took the place of the expelled, false gods. « When a strong man armed keepeth his palace », as Jesus said later, « His goods are in peace : but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils » (1). One stronger than all the demons of Paganism was come on to save the world.

Constantine, declared protector of the Christians, destroyed the famous temple of Aphrodite at Afka, in the Lebanon, where the most dreadful abominations were committed, and forbad under pain of severe penalties, the offering of the girls of Heliopolis, reputed to be the most beautiful in the country, as a sacrifice to the infamous worship of the goddess. Finally, he dedicated to the Christians of Baalbeck a basilica, so beautiful that its equal

(1) Luk. XI, 21, 22.

has never been seen (1). A Greek Cross, sculptured on the base of one of the pilasters in the temple of Jupiter, makes one think that this temple itself, converted into a church, was the basilica of Constantine.

Theodosius the Great did more than that. This emperor perceived more than once that the Pagan temples converted into churches served to maintain in the people a part of the old superstitions. He resolved to destroy them.

« The illustrious Constantine, during his reign, only closed the temples of the idols and the Greek sanctuaries, says the chronicler Paschale or Alexandrinum (2), « But Theodosius destroyed them ». He built a Christian church out of the material of the temple of Heliopolis, that of Baal-Helios, or Baal-Sun, the great and famous Trilithon.

The remnants of the church builts by Theodosius are still seen today in front of the great temple of Baal-Sun.

Eusebus tells us that since the time of Constantine, Heliopolis had a bishop. The name of that first bishop remained unknown, as well as the names of most of his successors. History only names one,

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(1) Aboul-Faraj (1226-1286) Histoires des dynasties.

(2) Chronicler Paschal, 298th Olympiad. This book was begun in the time of Constantine by an unknown author, and was finished during the reign of Heraclius (610-641) by a second author, also unknown.

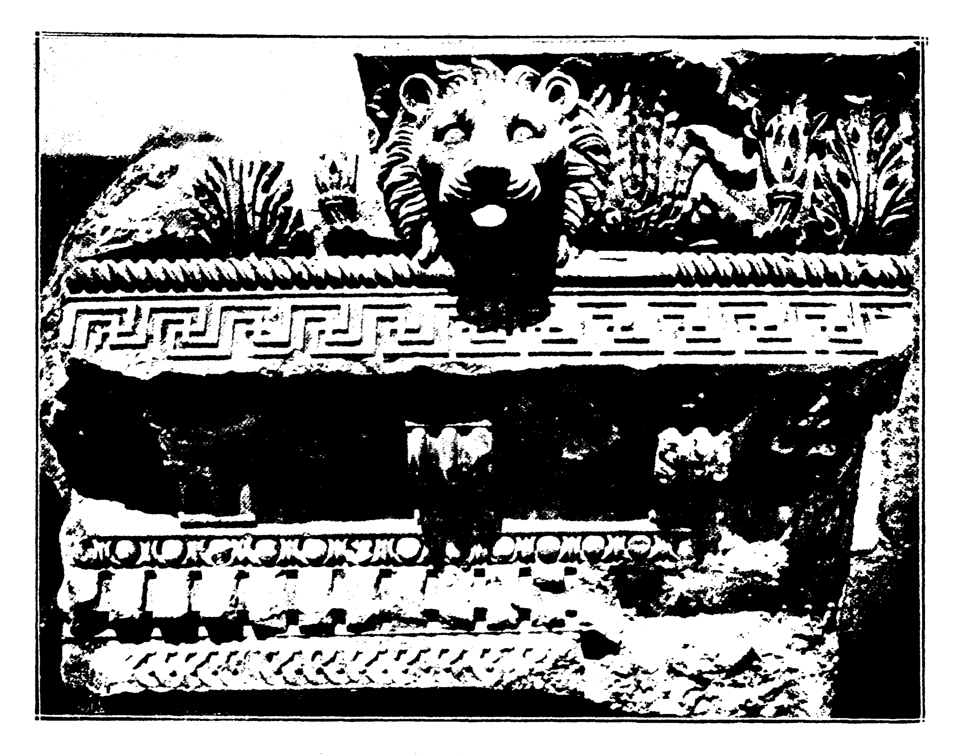
Joseph who assisted at the Synod of Antioch, under the Patriarch Domnus Peter (1). The Christian chronicle of Heliopolis during the Roman dominion records some acts of persecution.

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Mussulman Epoch. — The Mussulman conquest came to change the face of things. The Mussulman conquerors had to stop their march for a time to expel the Persian forces lying behind them ; this was after the occupation of the Syrian Provinces by the troops of Omar. But since the 15th year of the Hegira (February 636 A. D.), lead by Abu 'Obeida, they overran Homs and besieged the passage of Baalbeck. The Emperor Heraclius had to flee to Constantinople, where he soon met with his death. Since that day, the faith of the cross remained humiliated, but always fruitful in virtue in the hearts of men.

This is not the place to relate all the wars that took place around Baalbeck by the different Mussulman princes, and the consequences thereof. In accordance with the Arab authors, Baalbeck was, during the reign of the Omayad and the Abbaside Sultans, a very important town. The history of the Seleucides (a Turkish dynasty that overran Syria in

(1) Le Quien, Oriens Christianus, T. II, p. 843.



A capital with a lion head

1070) mentions every now and then that Baalbeck was a strong town, whose temples were transformed into strongholds. Saladin took possession of Baalbeck in 1175. It was twice attacked during the Crusades, but could not establish their authority in it. The first of these expeditions went from Tripoli in 1176, under the command of Raymond; the second one came from Sidon during the time of Baldwin IV.

The invasion of Tamerlan, in 1400, attracted once more the attention of nations towards this unfortunate town, and since that time its ancient importance began to decline. The Persian historian, Chereffedin (1), says that the town was renowned for the beauty and splendour of its walls, and for the height of its buildings; it was by the order of Solomon that the genii built it, and only God knows how. After having sacked Homs, Timour carried his camp in front of Baalbeck, where the imperial standard was let fly over the corners of the castle walls. Soon after, the besieged inhabitants of the town fell down at the feet of the victor, offering him all their riches, and supplies for his numerous troops.

Being of the opinion that he was sent by Allah to destroy the temples of idolatry and to proclaim

(1) Hist. de Timur Bek, trad. de Petits de la Croix, T. II, L. V, c. 23.

the Koran, Timour spared the livres of the inhabitants. When the weather during that winter became severely cold and the snow covered the ground, he left the place together with his thirty thousant proud horsemen for Damascus. On his way there he visited the supposed tomb of Noah at Kerak, near Zahle, to get the benediction of that well-known and holy patriarch.

Towards the middle of the 16th century a powerful Metwali family, that of the Harfoush Emirs, oppressed the inhabitants for many long years. A great number emigrated to neighbouring towns, specially to Zahle. In 1751 Baalbeck did not count more than 5000 inhabitants. Yet, even this number was diminished during the incessant revolutions that agitated the country. At last in 1852 Baalbeck came under prefecture of the wilayet (state) of Damascus, and regained security and peace, but was no more than a large village.

Even in the most troubled periods during the Mussulman dominion, one learns that from time to time a bishop of the United-Greeks had his seat in Baalbeck. Since the middle of the last century the regular succession of the Greek-Catholic bishops was seated in Baalbeck without any interruption.

The chronicles of the Middle-Ages report that several dreadful earthquakes further demolished the ruins of the town, especially in the 12th century. In 1318 an inundation of torrent-like waters from the

mountains, caused a breach of 99 ft. in the solid ramparts of the town, destroyed the Great Mosque, and overthrew over 500 houses.

It was in the 16th century that some European travellers signalled for the first time the splendour of the amazing ruins of Baalbeck. Up till that time their wonder was ignored. The Mussulmans saw nothing but large edifices suitable to be made into; fortresses; and the Crusaders only paid them some visits to enable them to give some descriptions of them. Since that time they suffered much damage in 1759 an earthquake overturned many columns, displaced blocks of stones, and caused the walls to incline. Nevertheless, « they remain, perhaps, the most beautiful ruins existing in the world » (1).

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(1) Reclus.

CHAPTER II

EMINENT PERSONAGES.

I. **The Martyrs.** — *St Eudoxia*, penitant, martyred at Heliopolis in 114 A. D.

« Eudoxia was born in Samaria ; she was one of the most beautiful and spiritual women of her time. Her eyes carried poison to all hearts ; rarely has a woman of such reputation made more disturbance or sowed more mischief than she did. Out of her degraded and infamous profession she gained tremendous sums of money. As she was one evening sitting in a room adjacent to a christian dwelling, she heard of a painting being done depicting the eternal tortures reserved for the souls that died without repentance. Eudoxia was seized with fear, and the next morning she went looking for a priest who would teach her the true faith.

« At the end of a week the sincere penitant was filled with ecstasy, and saw a place in the

heavens reserved for her among the blessed ones.

« After having been baptized, she retired into a house of retreat. Those who loved Euxodia in her sin resented her repentance. A young truant was disguised in the cloak of holiness, and resolved to deliver her. The saintly girl avoided the stratagem, and the insolent intruder fell dead at her feet. By her fervent prayers life returned to the miserable deceiver, and he, too, went to seek repentance for his dissolute life.

« Fearing that she would cause a riot among the people whose affection she was gaining through the many miracles and kind acts which she performed, the governor of the province secretly cut off her head » (1).

St. Gelasimus, comedian. — « In the 269th year after the Ascension of Our Lord, under the consuls Tuscus and Anullinus, St Gelasimus was martyred in Heliopolis of the Lebanon.

« He was the second comedian of the theater. To jeer at baptism of the Christians in a public play, the acters threw Gelasimus in a tub filled with lukewarm water. The fellow when coming out of the water, wearing the white robe of neophites, cried out, « I have seen the Glory of God. I am a christian, and will die as a christian ». Then he withdrew from the scene.

(1) Petits Bollandistes.

« At his words the people of Heliopolis who witnessed the scene hurried with fury from their benches, seized Gelasimus who was still wearing his white robe, dragged him outside the theater and stoned him to death.

« The parents of the martyr buried his body in the market-town of Mariammen, or Mariamna, and erected an oratory over his grave». (1). The site of Mariammen is no longer traceable today.

St. Cyril, deacon and martyr. — « During the reign of Constantine, the deacon of Heliopolis, in the Lebanon, full of zeal for the religion of Christ, broke down many idols of the town. He was put to death by the Pagans who did not fear to cut open his stomach and taste his liver. They could not hide their crime from the eyes of the Lord Who sees everything, and they had to suffer retribution. All who had dared to carry to their mouths the bowels of the martyr, had their teeth fall out one after the other, their irritated tongues melted on their lips, and their eyes lost light; because of all these evils, they manifested to all the might of the true religion» (2).

II. **The learned ones**. - *Callinicus the Be'el-becky*, architect and chemist, towards 670 A. D. was the inventor of the Greek-fire (a wild-fire that the

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(1) Chronicler Paschal, 269th. Olympiad.

(2) Theodoret-Epiphany,

water could not extinguish), and of which the Crasaders had so much to suffer in their heroic struggles.

The Crusaders were never able to know the compositions of that miraculous fire, and finally the Orientals, too, lost the secret of how to make it.

Constantine, son of Luca, may also be counted among the famous men of Baalbeck. As philosopher and doctor of high reputation, he translated into Arabic many scientific works. He belonged to the Non-United-Greek church; he died in 908.

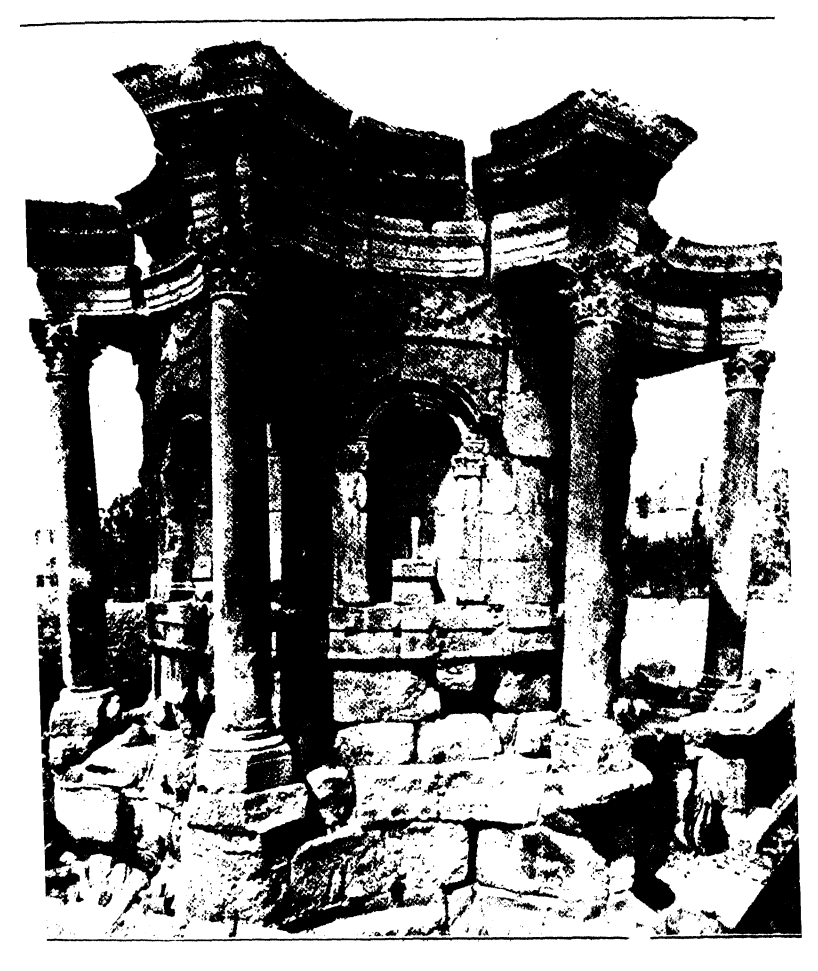
CHAPTER III

ACTUAL STATE.

The traveller going to Baalbeck by the new road from Zahle, encounters a fine ruin on the left of the road, five minutes before reaching the town. It is a small temple built of eight columns, surmounted by a great archway. The graceful silhouette of the temple, from far, loses its lustre when seen from near. This small temple is known to the natives as Koubbet Douris, cupola, or dome of Douris. The columns, meantime, are of superb granite, and are 3 ft. 3 ins. in diameter.

A little farther on the road winds through the gardens ; it is thus that in the East they call every field in the neighbourhood of a populated center, when it has some water, trees and shadow. These gardens of Baalbeck are irrigated by running water of the fountain. Greenness is everywhere, and trees in abundance, even though the soil is not deep.

The little enclosure that is seen to the left of the road on getting to the first houses, with cypress trees and a wely (shrine) with a white dome, is the tomb of Kholat, daughter of Hussein, son of Ali,



Temple of Venus

cousin of Mohammed. After the defeat and death of Ali by the Omayads, his daughter was taken captive to Damascus, but on her way into exile, Kholat died at Baalbeck. Recently a cemetery for Metwalis (a sect of Moslems) was arranged around the grave, and women go there to weep every Friday.

As it should be, the best building that stands at the entrance of the town is the «**Grand New Hotel**», proprietor Mr Fred Arbeed. Being of modern construction, this hotel is furnished with all the commodities that a traveller could ask. All the rooms are bright, airy and spacious ; have hot and cold running water, laid on with heating as well, and a room with a private bath. The «cuisine» is of the very first class, and its fairy site near the Roman quarries, surrounded with gardens and orchards, completes the pleasure of the tourist, who, with the exhilirating air he breathes and the panorama he admires, give him a real lasting joy.

Then comes a square house of low stories, with red tiles of Marseilles; this is the Protestant Mission. Really, if it were not for the landscape and the superb colonnades that dominate the trees, one would imagine oneself at the entrance of a large village in Province.

The continuation of the road forms the principal street of the town, and which it traverses from south to east. A few steps more, and one sees to the right the residence of the United-Greeks' bishop, as well as the cathedral ; then follow the oriental

to excite the admiration of the coming generations until the hands of men, and the earthquakes accomplish the work of their destruction. By the grandeur of the project, the completion and delicateness of their execution, they seem to be superior to all temples of occidental Asia, of Africa and of Europe. They resemble those of Athens in their detail, but surpass them in grandeur ; they are vast and massive as those of Thebes, but surpass them in grace and lightness ».

The small temple rises on the left, the great temple to the right ; and both open to the east. It is the order of the temples of the Acropolis at Athens, the Panthe on and the Erecthion, except that the Pantheon is to the left. But, the smallest temple in Baalbeck exceeds in its dimensions the largest temple in Athens.

We shall visit, first of all, the temples, the citadel, the crypts and then the exterior of the precincts.

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The propylæa. — It suits us to begin the visit of the ruins by the Propylæa of the great temple. This portico, proceeding slightly from south to north, juts out at the east of the precinct. Long ago, one could ascend it by a monumental staircase which was later on destroyed to bar the fortress from that

side. The portico is 33 ft, 3 ins. higher than the gardens. It is 182 ft. 6 ins. long, and 46 ft. 6 ins. wide. It was adorned with twelve Corinthian columns, 3 ft. 3 ins. wide, of rose granite. The bases have remained in their place. On two of them, the third on the right and the left, one could perceive from the side of the gardens a Latin inscription repeated twice :

Magnis DIIS HELIUPOLitanis, PRO SALute ET VICTORIIS Domini Nostri ANTONINI PII FELicis AUGusti ET JULIÆ AUGustæ MATRIS Domini Nostri, CASTRorum SENATus PATRiæ, AURelius, ANTonius LONGINUS, SPECULator LEGionis I ANToninianæ, CAPITA COLOMNARUM DUA ÆREA AURO INLUMINATA SUA PECUNIA EX VOTO Libens Animo Solvit.

« To the great gods of Heliopolis, for the salutation and the victories of our Lord Antonius the Pious, august, and the august Julia, mother of our lord, the council of the army of the fatherland, Aurelius, Antonius Longinus, charged to survey the first Antonian Legion, following a vow offered freely the cost of gilding the two brazen capitals of those columns ».

At both extremities of the portico rise two square pavilions decorated on the exterior with prominent Corinthian pilasters. The Musulmans

raised these pavilions higher, transforming them into towers for defence. The one to the south is demolished, but the one the north is well preserved. It communicates with the portico by three openings separated by square pillars rising to a moderate height like shafts of columns. On one of these doors is a fine figure of Venus on bas relief, standing between two genii holding a garland. The room of the pavilion (38 ft. 5 ins. by 32 ft. 4 ins.) is richly decorated with pilasters, friezes and carved niches. Tradition says that the Sultan ez-Zaher fell into the hands of the Governor of Baalbeck, and was imprisoned in this room. Schiba, his Vizier, disguised himself and formed a friendship with the relatives of the Governor, and succeeded in rescuing his Sultan through the gap in the eastern wall. The guide shows this gap to the tourists and calls it «The Gap of Schiba ».

The wall at the bottom of the portico, decorated in the same way as the pavilions, was pierced with three doors, the largest of which is not less than 23 ft. wide. Actually, only the small door to the left is open. In passing through it, we notice a staircase in the thickness of the wall itself, leading to the upper divisions. This door leads to the **Hexagonal Court.**

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The Hexagonal Court. — It has the form of a regular hexagon, whose sides from the outside mea-

sure 125 ft. The court was encircled with symmetrical buildings. There was at each side, except the one to the west, saloons or recesses, each preceded with four columns of granite. In the angles between the recesses were smaller apartments of irregular shape. The faces of all these halls were ornamented with variated two-story niches; some are egglike in shape, and the others square, with triangular pediments, and above are friezes of fruit garlands. It is supposed that these recesses served as shelter, or meeting places for the priests, while the rooms served for their lodging. Of these recesses and the decorations, there remains nothing except the groundwork of the walls and some niches on the meridional side. The western side was made out of three doors facing the doors of the Propylæa. One could actually see only the door on the right, from which a staircase cut on the inside of the wall, today ruined, leads to the upper chambers. These doors gave access to **The Great Rectangular Court**, the forecourt of the Great temple.

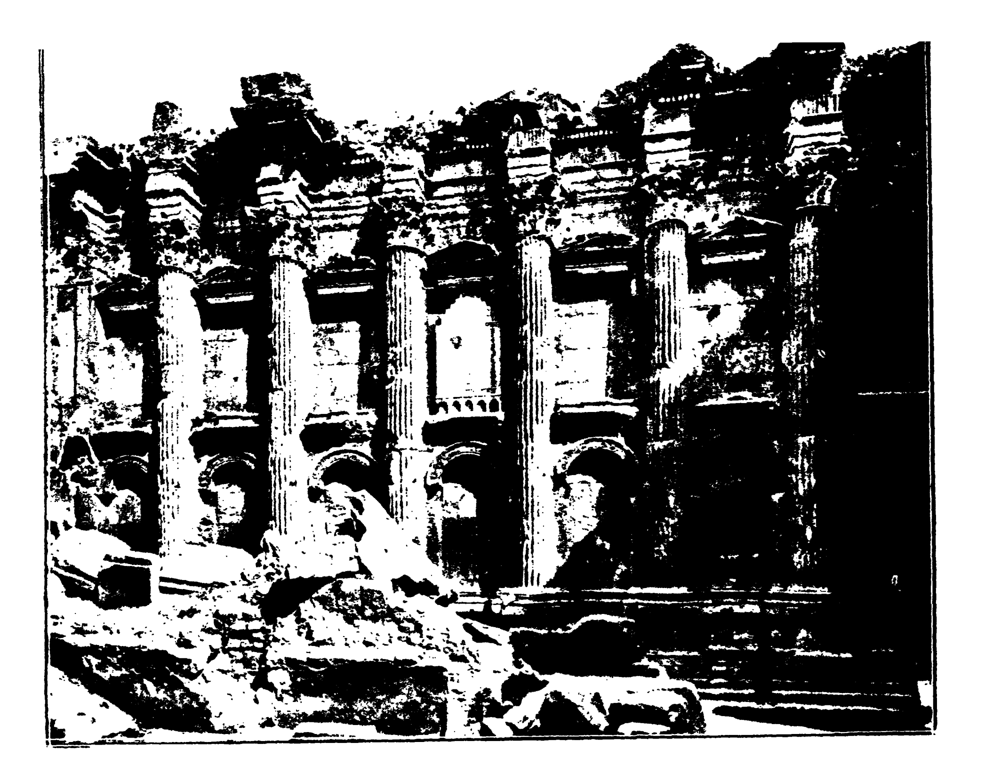
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The Rectangular Court. — This splendid Court measures 437 ft. in lenght and 376 ft. in width. It is surrounded from north, south and east with rectangular recesses alternating with semi-circular chambers; the corners are occupied with halls of smaller

size. The sides to the north and the south have, each, two semi-circular chambers and three recesses ; that in the middle is larger than the others. As in the Hexagonal Court, these open on to the court by sets of columns whose scattered shafts are mostly of syenite or red granite. The walls are equally decorated with two-story niches of various forms ; a great number of these still exist with no other decay than the loss of the little columns holding the entablatures. Two large niches flank the three eastern doors; others surmount the openings of the semi-circular chambers. Without doubt they sheltered the innumerable statues of the Syrian, Roman and Athenian gods, up to the time when the Christians were masters of the place and destroyed them forever. Out of this Pagan gallery there remains only the mutilated figure of Bacchus, and a wing whose foundations are hardly distinguishable.

When examining the ruins as a whole, from the middle of the court they present a striking and a splendid aspect ; but if one examins them in detail there is revealed an odd ornamentation showing bad, and even uncounth, taste, which denotes a period of decadence in the sculpture of that time. To quote only one example, there is an enormous head of Medusa, a dragon with the wings of a vampire, and an immense figure of a woman, which covers the vaulting of the semi-circular chambers.

Some uncomplete mouldings show that the Pagan artists had not finished their work when the



Interior of the Temple of Ba[illegible]hus

Emperor Constantine, in the first half of the 4th. century, made intervention and stopped their progress.

In the middle of the court, a level elevation from the ground forms a vast quadrangular court. At the western extremity of this esplanade, just facing the great temple, it ends in two solid semicircular constructions, flanked by two similar, but smaller ones and without decorations. Evidently, it is the treble apsis of a Christian Basilica, of which the esplanade marks its site. In the line of the three semi-circles we see the foundation of the exterior wall of the basilica, as well as the bases of the pillars separating the naves. We can trace also the place of the lateral doors. This must have been the basilica erected to the True God, by Theodosius the Great, after he had destroyed the Great Temple of the Sun.

A Christian cannot contemplate without emotion such a noble proof of our faith amidst this Pagan Pantheon, formerly the richest in the world, but now emptied of its numberless idols. The Theodossian Basilica occupies the place of honour in front of the vast temple of the Roman gods. Surely it was the seat of the Master who came to dethrone forever the demons of idolatry, and expand in the world the rays of His true Light.

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The Great Temple. — Six gigantic columns of peristyle, only remants of this edifice, give only an imperfect idea of the richness in architecture accumulated in the Great Temple of the Sun, the largest of the Roman world. Its peristyle had a length of 269 ft. (from east to west), and 143 ft. in width. It contained ten columns at the front, ten at the back, and seventeen on each side, making fifty-four in all.

The existing six columns belonged to the meridional gallery. The Arabs have ruthlessly hacked them, for the purpose of securing the lead, and have done so much damage that recent visitors, practical architects, have prophesied the speedy fall of the last remains of, perhaps, the finest temple in the world. In 1751, Pococke and other travellers found nine erect. They are 8 ft. 4 ins. apart from each other ; the basis of a style clumsy enough, rest on a strong stylobate; the shafts, smooth and without tapering have a diameter of 7 ft. 4 ins., and a height of 41 ft. 6 ins., and are composed of three tambours connected with cramp-iron. There is nothing of note in the Corinthian capitals. The architrave is of three parts ; above rule a frieze with a row of consoles near to each other. Higher up are denticles, Corinthian modillions, and a high moulding. This entablature is not less than 17 ft. 6 ins. high ; it

holds its last moulding 77 ft. 4 ins. over the court. Was the temple open to the sky, or was it closed by a vaulted roof? or by tiles? It cannot be decided.

The Saracenic walls that enclose this part of the acropolis to the north, has taken the place of the septentrional colonnade of the peristyle; four high fragments of the columns remain there. No vestige of colonnade could be traced on the western side; even the stylobate itself is hidden by stone filings.

Some steps are traceable in the back of the interior of the temple; this proves that this part was raised and was a sanctuary. Some blocks of masonry, placed in two lines parallel with the length of the temple, and mark, probably, the site of great inside pilasters.

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The Small Temple. — The Small Temple, called also the Temple of Bacchus, separated by an area covered with ruins, lies south-east of the Great Temple. It is well erected on a fine independent stylobate, and decorated in the same way; but, it has no fore-court. If it is called the Small Temple, it is only because of comparison with its neighbouring temple; it measures 225 ft. long, and 118 ft. 6 ins. wide. Like the other one, it is peripterous, i. e., totally surrounded with colonnades. In spite of the ravages it has suffered, it remains the most beautiful

antique monument of Syria, and one of the best preserved ones.

A coin of Septimus Severus, the builder of this temple shows it from above, from the south-east. One could see in the front, between the continuation of the stylobate, even deeper, a wide and great staircase giving access to the pronaos that opens by a peristyle of eight columns. The roof is figured by slopes with pediments on both extremities. The inspection of the ruins shows us that behind the eight columns at the entrance there were another eight fluted columns, and still behind these were two more fluted ones, facing the continuation of the lateral walls and forming the vestibule. All the other columns were glossy and smooth. The side to the west had also eight columns; the peristyles to the north and south had fifteen columns each; in all there were fifty outside columns. Their height, including the Corinthian capitals, is 47 ft., with a diameter of 6 ft. 2 ins. at the base, and 5 ft. at the top. They leave between them and the walls of the cella a corridor 9 ft. 10 ins. wide. They hold on top an entablature with a nice frieze. The entablature is bound to the cella by enormous flag-stones making a ceiling over the corridor, sculptured with fine art. These are hexagons surrounded by lozenges, with a figure in the center, and rich ornamentations on the separating sections. Under this ceiling the wall of the cella is

terminated by a nice entablature with frieze and cornice.

At the side of the entrance, to the east, there are four columns erected on rectangular basis. Those to the left are smooth and belong to the southern peristyle; those to the right are fluted, and the one makes part of the second range of the pronaos, while the other faces the prolongation of the lateral wall of the cella. A small crenallated turret of Arabic construction is raised over their entablature. In 1751, Pococke saw in the facade only these four columns, but to the south he saw nine in their places, and one leaning against the wall.

Of the southern peristyle there only remain standing today four columns (to the extreme east side), including the two which we have already mentioned. They are also bound to the cella by superb ceilings. In the middle of this peristyle there is one column, undoubtedly shaken by an earthquake, leaning against the cella; it has been lying thus, the top against the wall, during two centuries, and the three tambours, of which the shaft remains, bound together. All the columns are equally made out of three tambours, united by means of square iron pivots placed in the center of each and sealed with lead.

There remain four columns to the west still bound by their entablature; three fragments lie at the foot of the pillars. The ground is spread over

with superb flag-stones fallen from the ceiling. One of these is almost intact. A bust of a woman suckling a child occupies the hexagonal space in the center, and five small heads fill the smaller spaces in the form of lozenges, and deeply cut foliages cover the dividing spaces.

Almost the whole of the northern peristyle still exists. It has nine pillars in their places supporting thirteen flag-stones more or less well conserved, with the two busts in haut-relief.

Robert Wood (1), in 1751, found a total of twenty-nine columns standing. Volney, in 1784, did not see more than twenty. We now find only eighteen. Long may they remain !

Let us go into the interior. The door of the cella is of striking grandiosity ; its width is 20 ft. 9 ins., its height must be from 40 ft to 50 ft. The jambs are profusely decoratad in a Corinthian style with foliages, spikes of corn, and wine branches from which young lovers are plucking grapes, each one in a graceful pose. The lintel, composed of three stones, exhibits in the embrasure of the door an eagle with an aigrette holding a wand in his talons, and the strings of two garlands in his beak. Two famous genii of bewitching grace hold the other extremities of the garlands. The eagle with an aigrette is the Oriental eagle, symbol of the sun, and can be seen in the ruins of Palmyra. The three stones of the lintels

(1) The Ruins of Baalbeck. London, 1757.

were displaced during the earthquake in 1759, the one in the center slipped downwards.

Two massive pillars rise on both sides of the door (from the interior of the temple). These serve as a support for a square flight of stairs; the one to the left is now destroyed, but the one to the right can be used to climb to the top and walk over the walls' top. To give an idea of the hugeness of the materials employed in the construction, let us say that sixteen steps are cut in the same stone.

The interior of the temple presents a wonderful view. It measures 89 ft. long and 76 ft. wide. It is divided into two parts, the nave, occupying two-thirds of its length, and the sanctuary, erected on a higher level. The latter is separated from the nave by two pillars connected with the lateral walls by means of arcades, and a raised wall covered with delicate sculptures representing scenes of daily life on a small scale. Each of the lateral walls of the nave is decorated with six fluted demi-columns with prominent entablatures, and two stories of niches separated by a mid-high frieze. The lower niches are of simple arcades of which the vaulted roofs are richly suclpurted and made out of a single block. The upper niches are rectangular and crowned with projecting pediments.

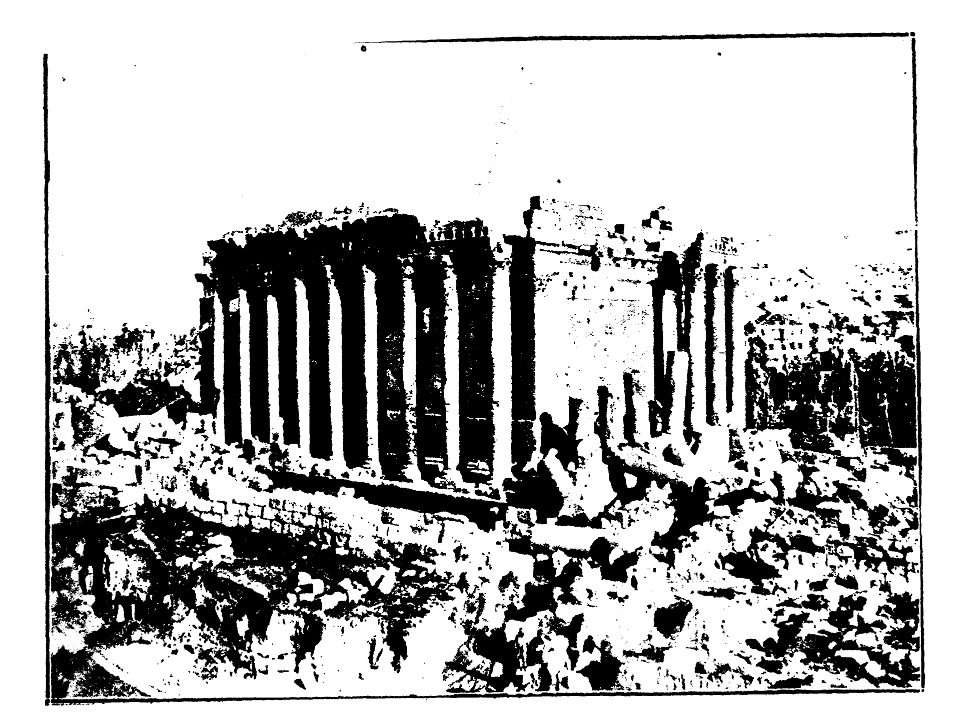
The sanctuary is more simple, and instead of fluted demi-columns, it has flat pilasters. The principal idol stood at the further end between two

double pilasters. In all this edifice overloaded with decorations, not a piece of marble could be found; all is of stones. It is so with all the edifices of the acropolis, all of the same coloured stone, except some column shafts of red granite imported from Egypt. Some subterrenean cells are built underneath the sanctuary; access to there is made through a door on the left from the inner side of the raised wall.

The vault of the temple and several cornices have fallen down; their debris cover the ground. It is the north wall that is conserved.

Some inachieved sculptures in two lower niches lead us to think that work was going on yet to complete the decoration, when Canstantine transformed the temple into a church. Besides, a Greek cross hewn with skill in the middle of the base of the fourth column to the left, gives evidence that the worship of the True God reached here one day to purify the place from the stain of Paganism. Here terminate the visit to the great temple.

The dimensions of the edifices and the enormous size of the materials, the perfection in cutting the stones and their joining together without cement, the richness in the architectural decorations, as well as the grace and finish of the sculptures, are the object of a right admiration, and place these ruins in the first rank of Roman edifices spared by time. They are for sure the most rich magazine of orna-



Temple of Bacchus

mentations of the Roman and Greek styles.

These splendid edifices have no influence over the culture of. the populated environs. They were the end of an art, the end of a century, the end of a religion ; and now they rest in the magnificent cradle nature has provided for them between two chains of splendid moutains. They seem to the historian as a beautiful flower quickly faded, and bearing no fruit for future generations.

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The Citadel. — The visitor has already seen a number of old fortifications which were added to the old ruins by the Arabs ; such as parapets, battlements, loop-holes in all the walls. etc., etc. He could notice to the south of the small temple the remains of a square Arabic construction, with one of its angles projecting outside the acropolis. This was, it is said, the lodging of the military commander.

Here and there are Arabic inscriptions giving the name of the governor who executed the work, and indicating, more or less approximately, the date, as well as the name of the ruling sultan. Let us mention only the inscription on the small fortification that dominates the fore-columns of the small temple. This single inscription is sufficient to give a hint to many others of the same kind.

«In the name of God the Merciful, the building of this fortress was renewed in the reign of the

mighty sultan, great king of kings, who dominates the people and is master of the Arabs and the Persians; who, made powerful by Heaven, is victorious over his enemies, is the sword of religion; who holds the rein of Islam; who is exterminator of revolters and sectarians; the sultan of the two worlds, and king of the two seas; the servant of both the sacred temples (of Medina and Mecca), Kalwan Kassem, who is the prince of believers—may God perpetuate his reign! — by the care of the servant depending on God, slave to His Government, consacrated to His Service, Hassan, son of Mohammed ».

The Mamluk Sultan, Kalwan, ruled from 1279 to 1290.

A few paces forward, to the left of the entrance of the small temple, stands a square construction placed like a bastion on an angle of the precinct. It is to this work that they attribute the name «Citadel». Its entrance, situated on the west, is a magnificent doorway decorated at the top by honey-combs so much favoured in the Arabic style. A flight of steps, now in a bad condition, descends to the lower story. Only halls, irregulary disposed, are to be found under the heavy vaults, with a huge water cistern in which to conserve water in time of a siege. The northern wall is partly made up of the stylobate of the temple. If one could get behind it, he would probably find the vestige of a monumental staircasse.

The steps that lead to the second story are to the left of the main door. The hall is in the form of a Greek cross, perfectly regular, with four chambers at the corners. That hall gives an imposing aspect with its enormous building material, its strong walls pierced with shafts of light shining through the loop-holes, and its roof opening in an octagonal shape at the meeting of the vaults, from where the daylight radiates in abundance into all parts of the building. Many travellers have taken this hall for a church. One of the northern chambers has an opening, actually obstructed, that descends to the under-ground. It is said that the underground there was a secret passage for exit in time of a siege, and that it had an outlet somewhere in the plain. Another northern chamber, completely dark, is decorated with some arcades surmounted by a cupola. As the guides say, it was used as an arsenal. Oriental cus-toms tend to make us think that it was a bathroom. — The third story of the citadel is entirely demo-lished.

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The Subterranes. — The propylæa, the exedræ aud other constructions ornating the two fore-courts of the great temple, like these same fore-courts, are from 23 ft. to 27 ft. higher than the surrounding ground. It was necessary to erect these buildings on

high and solid substructions. These substructions are the subterranes of the acropolis.

Under the Propylæa is a long vaulted hall; under the pavilions, two rooms with outside doors. Under the exedræ and the chambers of the Hexagonal and Rectangular Courts, are corresponding halls, equally vaulted.

Wood and Dawkins (1751) have gone through all these subterranes, and have marked them in their atlas. Today the traveller visits only the subterranes of the Quadrangular Court.

The corridors are interesting on account of their dimensions, strong walls and vaults. It could be said they are railway tunnels constructed with exceptional skill and perfection. Those to the north and to the south are nineteen ft. wide, and that to the east is wider, being 26 ft. wide. Their first foundations, made out of huge stone blocks, appear to belong to older constructions than the vaults; these are assuredly Roman. The foremen of the workers in charge of the construction seem to have been delighted to see their names inscribed on the blocks. On the keystone of the vault situated in the southern corridor, one reads this inscription: DIVISIO MOSCHI; section of Moschus; in the eastern corridor; GIRSU, and at the eastern extremity of the northern corridor: DIVISIO CHO. Under this latter inscription are some unintelligible figures denoting perhaps the date of the construction.

The keystones of many vaults bear the figure of a divine personage. These are particulary recognizable in the southern corridor; the head of Hercules being located where this corridor meets the eastern one. A little further is the head of Diana with a crescent, then a third head, and lastly an eagle.

The most remarkable of the Subterrenean Halls is that to the north. It used to open to the outside of the precinct by three bays separated by pillars. These were blocked up by the Saracens. This hall was the sanctuary of an unknown divinity. In face of the three openings are three niches with tiny columns and pediments. All the statues and images of gods have been destroyed; not a relic remains of them.

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Outside view of the precinct.— On going out by the main entrance of the acropolis, we make the circuit of the precinct, moving from south to north. A moat, digged at the time the acropolis was transformed into a fortress, girdles the walls of the precinct. It is full of Moorish and Arabic work of art.

That which attracts our attention first of all is the distinction between the Roman and the Arabic walls. The latter are built of dissembling, and sometimes enormous, materials. One can see in them

pieces of frieze, bases, column shafts, etc.,fitted together strongly but without skill or art. On the other hand, the Roman walls are built of beautiful stones, fitted together without mortar or other substances ; the blade of a knife could not be passed in between their joinings. The stones, meanwhile, are pierced with a multitude of holes for some unknown reason. Have they been used to hold ornaments? Or were they destined to hold the instruments with which they were lifted during the construction ? It cannot be told.

After passing three walled doors, we come across a wall partly Roman and partly Saracenic. It cannot be passed owing to the bramble and the debris. It bears two Arabic inscriptions, one of which dates from the time of Melek el-Adel, the successor of Saladin (1199-1218).

Much easier to visit, is the western wall. Likewise, this beautiful wall is surmounted by Saracenic masonry. A mixture of materials used by the workmen in the Middle-Ages lies in heaps ; there is a little of everything : column-schafts, capitals, friezes, cornices and sculptures of all sorts. Some of these materials are by chance very large, and must have needed active hands to place them so high. The builder proposed perhaps to transmit his name to the ensuing centuries, but had not the time to do so. That wihch leads us to think of this fact is a white stone, surmounted by a frame of honey-combs, all

ready for an inscription which was never carved.

Another interest draws the traveller the same way. To the extreme north of the wall is the famous **Trilithon** ; the three largest blocks of stones ever used in construction. They are three enormous bases, the one placed next to the other, 19 ft. high, on a range of blocks nearly as large. They measure in length 35 ft., 63 ft., 62 ft. 2 ins., by 13 ft. 4 ins. high, and as much broad. Their volume is from 3220 cubic. ft. to 3275 cu. ft.

The enormous size of these bases makes us think that the wall of which they form a part, may be the work of the Phœnicians, the Giblites, or the inhabitants of Jebeil (Byblos), skilful and daring stone workers, who were sent by King Hiram to Solomon to cut and put in order the large blocks of the Temple in Jerusalem ».

« *Præcepitque rex, ut tollerent lapides grandes..... quos dolaverunt cæmentarii Salomonis, et cæmentarii Hiram: porro Giblii præparaverunt ligna et lapides ad ædificandam domum* ».

« And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house, And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stone-

squarers : so they prepared timber and stones to build the house» (1).

The presence of a stone similar to the three of the **Trilithon**, even larger, in a neighbouring quarry which undoubtedly the Romans had worked out for the construction of temples, seems to give another opinion ascerting the origin of the **Trilithon** and attributing it to the Romans.

At the sight of these prodigious blocks placed so high and with such precision, one would ask by what means of transport was it possible to carry them here, and how was it managed to put them in place. Perhaps it was by the same and simple devices as used by the Pharaos to carry their colossal statues, depicted by the sculptures in their tombs. An inclined causeway, covered with timber planks, used to connect the quarry with the walls. This may have made it easier to glide these blocks over by means of wooden sledges.

The northern part of the precinct, joining the **Trilithon**, has also a mysterious origin. Along the whole length of the Great Temple, the precinct is two-fold. On the outside is a high wall of 19 ft., of massive stones reminding us of the Trilithon ; on the inside, at a distance of 19 ft. to 23 ft. from the outer border, is another wall formed by the Roman base of the great temple, surmounted by an Arabic

(1) I. Kings, V. 17, 18.



Displaced Column leaning against the wall of the Temple of Bacchus

wall. The outer wall is of much beauty ; there being nine stones in all, each approximately 30 ft. long, 13 ft. high, and 10 ft. wide. A clipped door grants entrance to the gutter that separates it from the high border. Some column shafts are found here, fallen from the peristyle of the Great Temple.

The precinct of the Rectangular Court is continued further on, and in the bending angle can be seen the opening of the northern subterranean corridor. The precinct continue further to the north by the septentrional wall of the said court. It is beautiful and well kept. It has only one door near the middle, which leads us to think that many low chambers corresponding to the exedræ were never dug. The north eastern angle is mostly fallen down; however, a low room is distinguishable, ornated by two niches.

Finally, on the east, is the wide door of the northern subterrane, partly demolished. It responds symmetrically to the door that serves today as entrance from the other side of the Hexagonal Court of the Propylæa.

CHAPTER V

OTHER ANTIQUITIES OF BAALBECK.

The Round Temple. — About 400 ft. south of the Propylæum in a straight line from its extremity is a small temple hidden behind the wall of certain property.

In spite of the ruin of the cupola and part of the wall, it is well enough preserved to enable one to imagine the reconstruction of its fallen parts. Unfortunately, this interesting ruin has lost its plumb and would disappear altogether if no haste is made to hold it safe.

The building is of original and graceful conception. It is a circular cella, with a width of 36 ft. and surrounded by a peristyle of seven columns of which the bases and entablatures form a series of concave arches, tangent with the wall of the cella; thus designing a star of seven arms with a monolith column at each point. The diameter of the star is exactly double the width of the temple itself, i. e., 72 ft; the columns are 10 ft. from the wall. We have said

seven arms, but the seventh is missing; its place is occupied by the door of the temple, facing the south. It is all of the richest Corinthian style.

The frieze on the outside of the wall is decorated by garlands carried by genii; pilasters harmonize with the columns of the peristyle, and large niches with small columns and pediments in between. An eagle is sculptured in the vault of one of the niches, while the others end by spandrels.

The door is sided by two monolithic columns placed in line with the extreme columns of the peristyle, surmounted by rectilienear entablatures. It is 20 ft. high, and 11 ft. 6 ins. wide. Its jambs and lintel are each made of one single stone. An inclining column overthrew the entablature and the lintel.

The interior of the cella is divided into a lower and an upper section by a cornice. Above are niches with triangular and semi-circular pediments alternately. Isolated small columns divide the circumference into six piers; in one of these is the door. Therefore, the same circular wall is divided from the outside into seven equal parts, and from the inside into six. A tray can be made out at the bottom of the wall which must have contained the columns bearing the lower cornices; but there is no trace of the columns.

I do not know on what foundation they base the saying that this temple was dedicated to Venus;

today, as a matter of fact, it is called thus. It is more probable that it was a chapel consacrated to the patron god of the great temple, and contained the statue of the god-porter. Similar chapels can be seen near the great temples of India.

The Christians transformed it into a church, dedicated to S[t] Barbara. All the inhabitants of Baalbeck, and the Moslems themselves, call it by that name. Some sculptures traced in the inside of the cella, with a cross painted in a circle, remind us that this was once a church.

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The Ramparts. — The wall of the acropolis, from the north and south, used to be the town's confines at the time of the Romans. The Roman ramparts follow almost the actual path of the Trilithon from the south-west angle of the acropolis, to the Zahle road. At some time in the past the first rows of stones could be traced in the garden east of the road. Many of those stones can, in fact, be seen in the wall enclosing the garden. Above the river that is crossed by the road, facing the water-mill, stands the old Roman Gate of Damascus. To this the Saracens have joined a vault after their fashion as if to lengthen the Roman vault. Just near by are the ruins of a recognizable square tower guarding the door. Further on, the Roman ramparts disappear under some new constructions. To find these again

one must get towards the north-east angle of the acropolis.

From this point they take a northern direction in line with the colonnade of the propylæa for a distance of about 1000 ft.; then they turn to the right.

When Ibrahim Pasha, the Egyptian, overran Syria, he built behind the wall a casern to lodge 2000 men; it was all built of small square houses, resembling the caserns of Torah, near Cairo.

The Roman gate to the north is situated a few paces beyond the casern. Judging by its beautiful base still erect, it must have been of a wonderful work. Its large cornices, the bases of the columns and the two projecting pavilions would make one think it to have been the facade of a large building.

Facing this gate, under the big tall trees, stands a beautiful mosque, built of white stone altogether, which has three cupolas. It is abandoned and in a state verging a ruin. It is called the Dome of the Monkeys (Kubbet es-Sa'adin).

The antique rampart does not stretch more than 540 ft. Further on it is destroyed, and over its base has been erected a jugged wall, with square towers at a distance of 30 paces from each other. This wall, too, is fallen down. From this point of the ruined wall the rampart turns to the south in a line with the mountain range of Sheik Abdullah, crosses the vale of Ras-el-Ain, and climbs straight

on over the steep rocks at the end of the mountain, from where it goes down again into the town to meet the Roman wall in the south.

This last part of the second precinct was well enough conserved in 1851. At that time M. de Saulcy read, on one of the north-west towers, the following : KENTYRIA ΠRIMA. (First Century).

This Latin, written in Greek characters, implies the Lower-Empire ; and as the inscription was found *in situ* (in its original position), M. de Saulcy saw in it the proof that the building where the military precinct is now found, was raised by the Christians to resist the Mussulman invasion. Today, that part of the precinct has entirely disappeared, the materials having served to build the neighbouring houses. In the meantime one can recognize the base of one of its towers in front of the new Greek cathedral. The wall seems to have been built in great haste with any building materials near at hand. Many funeral inscriptions of the Roman epoch were collected from its ruins. One of these is enchased in a pillar of the new cathedral's porch ; it is :

PIÆ MATRI C. TERENTIUS VERECUNDUS HCXXI.

« To his pious mother, Claudius Terentius respectful ».

Other inscriptions from the same source can be seen in the court of the Seraglio.

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The Theater. — The Theater of Heliopolis, where so many martyrs gave their blood for the Christian faith, is yet to be looked for. Perhaps it is the remains that we see in the Roman substruction that borders the Zahle road, near the Hotel Palmyra. This enormous wall that continues at right angles under the garden of the Sisters' Institution, must have belonged to a great public building. Quantities of columns were found in the environs, besides the relics of some statues and Greek inscriptions. There exists still, just nearby, a gate with a bust on the keystone of the arcade. Otherwise, the situation of this building outside the precincts of the sacred temples and at the border of the town is similar to many other Greek or Roman theaters whose ruins are distinguishable enough. It would not take time to execute wider excavations in order either to confirm or to contradict our surmise.

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The Great Mosque. – A high minaret, square at the base and octagonal at the top, indicates the Great Mosque. It is nearly 200 paces from the acropolis in the south-east. This building was at first a church consacrated to St John; it is built of materials from the Roman ruins. To make it their great

mosque, the Mussulmans had simply to repair it and make it fit for a mosque.

In turn, the mosque itself has become a ruin. It is simply an assemblage of dissembling columns ranged in three lines, badly connected the one with the other. There are eight large shafts of red granite from Syene, as well as two others of a smaller size. There are also nineteen columns of native limestone.

An Arabic inscription on the wall of the sanctuary says that the wall was rebuilt in the year 682 of the Hegira (1283 of our era), by Emir Mohyiddin Hassan, Governor of Baalbeck, under the reign of Sultan Kalawoun.

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Quarries and Tombs. — The chief quarries that supplied the materials to build Baalbeck and its temples, are on the south-east of the acropolis, a few minutes from the town, and just near the Grand New Hotel. It is at the entrance of these quarries, in the center of a vast excavation open to the sky that lies the **Hajar-el-Houbla** (the stone of the pregnant woman), which we have already mentioned while describing the Trilithon. It measures 69 ft. long, 16 ft. high, and 13 ft. 3 ins. wide. Its volume is 13547 cu. ft., and its weight is over 800 tons. It is perfectly hewn and lies in length towards the Trilithon, as if waiting for the workmen to glide it to its sisters in the acropolis.

Quarries — Hajar-el-Houbla

The quarries extend for a long way, up to the foot of the mountains in the south-west. Generally they are all open to the sky, but there are many caves dug in the rocks that afterwards were used as tombs. One of these vast burial caves can be seen above the huge stone.

Not far from there is a chapel of the United-Greeks, dedicated to St Elijah, erected on a raised mound in the inside of the quarry. It is a fact that the Christians had a place for prayer there, where so many desciples of Christ suffered for their faith during the time of persecution and oppression. Sozomene (1) and Theodoret (2) mention that the unfortunate Christians, persecuted by order of Julian the Apostate in Alexandria, were sent to Baalbeck, the principal haunt of Baal, to be perverted in their faith. But as they maintained their new faith in spite of the pains they suffered through the persecutions, the magistrates condemned them to work in the quarries.

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Half an hour's walk north of the town rises a rocky hill called *Kayal*. It marks out a second group of quarries, less considerable than the former. Many burial caves are to be found here as well.

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(1) V. 10, and VII, 15.
(2) IV. 22.

The tombs scattered above the town, on the flank of Mt. Sheik Abdullah, were more interesting before they were upturned and spoiled by recent constructions. Brocchi in 1824, P. Rylo, S. J., towards 1836, and M, de Saulcy in 1851, found on the declivity of the hill, not far from the border, four fragments of funeral inscription in Greek, which luckily clear a dark point in Evangelic history.

To fix the year when John of Zacharias was preaching in the wilderness, St Luke said : «Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judea, and Herod being Tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip Tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the Tetrarch of Abilene » (1). Now it happened that no trace of a Tetrarch of Abilene called Lysanias who lived in the time of Tiberias could be found; whereas the historian Josephus says that a prince of that name, Tetrarch of Abilene, was put to death upon the instigation of Cleopatra sixty-two years before the period mentioned by the Evangelist. This was the reason why Strauss and many others accused the New Testament of anachronism.

Instead of doubting the incontestable exactitude of the Holy Scriptures, it would have been more

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(1) St Luke III. 2. — The ruins of Abilene can be seen in a vale of the Anti-Lubanon, two-thirds of the way to Damascus, near the village of Souk-Wadi-Barada.

wise to await until new discoveries should clear the apparent contradiction to that historic document. In fact, as mentioned by Josephus the historian, the inscription in question tells about Lysanias the Tetrarch, and of his son Zenodore, who had the title of Tetrarch too, as shown on some coins that inform us that there were some descendants of Lysanias and Zenodore who still bore the name of Lysanias. It is of one of these descendants of the same name about whom St Luke spoke.

According to what Renan says (1), the various fragments of the inscription must have been posed as follows :

..... ΟΥ ΓΥΝΗ ..... ΘΥΓΑΤΗΡ ΖΗΝΟΔΩΡΩ
ΛΥΣΑΝΙΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΧΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΛΥΣΑΝΙΑ.....
ΚΑΙ ΤΟΙΣ ΥΙΟΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΥΣΑΝΙΑ..... ΚΑΙ ΤΟΙΣ
ΥΙΟΙΣ ΜΝΗΜΗΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ ΕΥΣΕΒΩΣ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΗ.

The first lacuna contained a name of a woman and a name of a man in the genitive case, with the ending OY. The other lacunæ correspond with names of men in the genitive case.

Therefore, it is a name of an unknown woman, wife of an unknown, and daughter of an unknown, who raised this monument to : 1st, Zenodore, son of

(1) Mission de Phénicie.

Lysanias the Tetrarch ; 2nd, Lysanias, son of... and to his sons; 3rd, to Lysanias son of... and to his sons.

The inscription is in square letters ; the O is a regular square, and the C is formed of three sides of a square. It is on a beautiful frieze decorated by a set of small flutings close to each other so as to form a long niche.

The tombs and the various funeral constructions of different times cover the hill up to the summit. The most interesting ones are in the vicinity of the summit.

A hundred paces further to the east, on the same hill, there is a small Mussulman cemetery surrounded by shafts of half columns. One tomb is distinguished from the rest ; it is that of Sheik Abdullah, that gave its name to the hill. Many devo ted Moslem pilgrims visit this tomb on certain days of the year.

In 1751 Pococke saw near this cemetery a Tuscan column about 50 ft. high. We know today, after the excavations undertaken by Montefiore towards the end of 1845, that this column marked the site of a tomb dug in the ground. The column was overturned, apparently by the earthquake in 1759. There remains only the shafts, 4 ft. in diameter, and a fine capital lying on the ground.

In going in the same direction on the crest of the same hill, up to the rocks that plunge in the valley of Ras-el-Ain, one finds a cistern of great

dimensions, and lower down, a small distance from the first houses, there are some huge hewn stones. Among these there is a wonderful frieze of strange carving. Its face bears a decoration of a flash-lightning, or zig-zag line. It is supposed that the founder of this ornament must have meant it for a vow to the great God of Baalbeck, Jupiter, the God of Lightning.

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Ras-el-Ain. — « The impression that Baalbeck made on me », says Wolf, (1), «was full of troubled and shocking emotions. In whatever direction I fixed my eyes, I could find nothing but ruins and débris. Not an intact figure or monument on which the eyes could rest with pleasantness. I was even affrighted when approaching the famous ruins of the Temple of the Sun, where huge columns and a good number of large, broken stones lay in confusion ; as the pavement around a barricade at the time of a riot ».

The quiet and fresh walk of Ras-el-Ain will relieve the traveller of his burdensome emotions, but, all that he will see is ruins. Is there anything else at Baalbeck ?

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(1) Reise in das Gelobte Land.

At the bottom of a green valley, largely open between two slopes of vineyards, the Moorish precinct of an old mosque is reflected in the clear water of a large basin. A silent stream issues forthwith from this basin. It is the source of Ras-el-Ain (the head of the fountain).

Many lower bases of a Roman temple, with divers stones from the same building can be seen in the wall bordering the basin and its small island. The temple must have been surrounded by water, like the temple of the same origin, but in a better state of preservation, that can be seen at the foot of the Lebanon, on the road from Baalbeck to Afka, in the lake Yammouneh.

Near the temple and on the brink of the basin are the remnants of a mosque. An Arabic inscription tells us that it was built by Melik (king) El-As'ad, near a smaller mosque that was built by his father, Melik ez-Zaher in 670 of the Hegira. (1271 of our era). No trace can be seen of the latter mosque.

The graceful building of white stones on the eastern side of the valley, facing the source, is the tomb of the Emirs Harfoush, the tyrants of the country for some years.

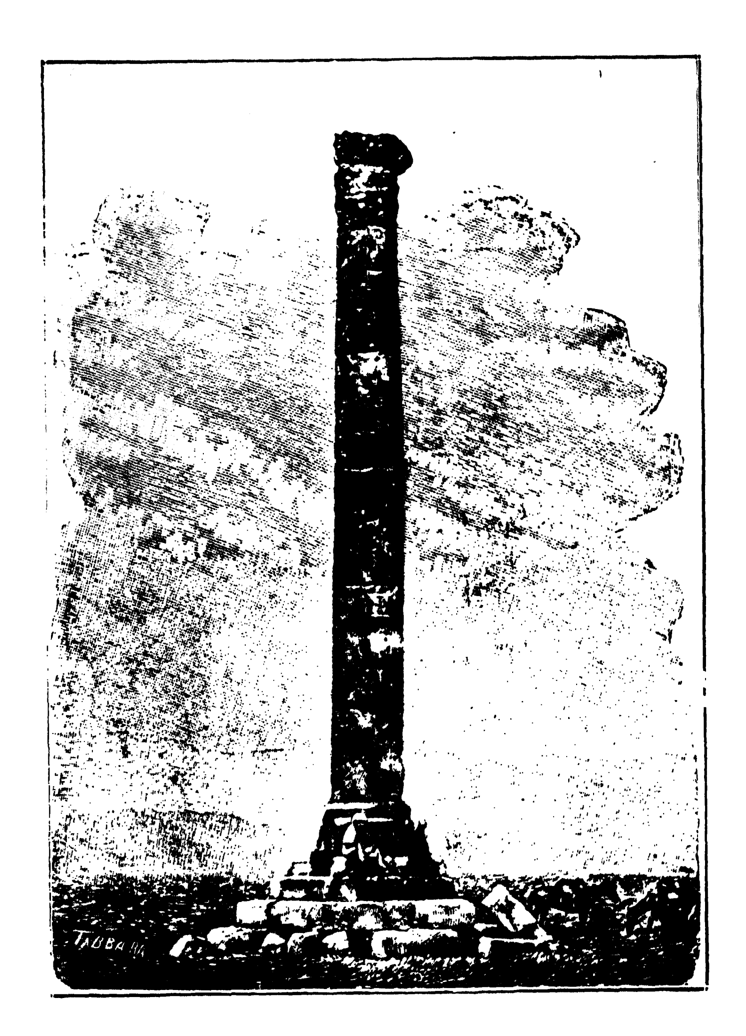
The Romans were not satisfied with the water of Ras-el-Ain which they could not conduct to the higher levels of the town. They went to find another source, the Lejooj, six miles east, equally limpid and abundant. They wound it round the

valley of Ras-el-Ain and lead it near the summit of Sheik Abdullah, from where it was distributed to the quarters of the town through baked, earthen pipes. Some broken pieces of these pipes can be seen here and there. Today, the Lejooj is lost in the fields before it reaches the town.

CHAPTER VI

THE ENVIRONS

There is no country in which the traveller encounters temples more numerous and more magnificent than in the environs of Baalbeck. This town, particularly in the Roman period, was a powerful home of idolatry, beaming its rays through the whole plain of Cœle-Syria. It is impossible to name all the temples of this country ; raised on hillocks, they are as mounted sentinels. Most of them bear no dates. They were as a girdle of forts around Baalbeck, a boulevard of pagan works extended by the Roman Emperors to impede Christianity. But, as the temples of Baalbeck itself, they were either destroyed, or converted into churches of the True God, before they were completed. Outlined capitals, and incomplete mouldings on the cornices remind the passers-by that all the forces of Rome and the pomp of the East were unable to extend the reign of Paganism in face of the Evangel and the Church founded by Jesus Christ.



Column of Ya'at

There are temples in all directions; on the slopes of the Anti-Lebanon, as well as on the border of the Lebanon. To the north-east, one hour and a half from the town, on the border of a deep gorge, stands the basement of a splendid temple, whose walls were destroyed to build the whole village of Nahle (a bee). To the south-east, on the way to Brithein (supposed Berothai where David carried a rich booty (1), we find a number of tombs and the remainder of antique idols. Further on in the same direction, at Seraïn, there are columns, friezes, and beautiful ceilings in the Antonian style that must have been part of a temple built in the time of those Emperors. An hour from here, always in the direction of the south-west, on the summit of the hill upon which is situated the village of Mazi, is a small temple converted into a church. On a stone, today placed in the supporting wall, it was written that Longinus of the Chalkis dedicated this altar to Saturn for the greeting of Cæsar, probably Marcus Aurelius.

In the village of Mejdeloun, a short distance from Baalbeck, we can see large columns with a lintel of a huge gate, last debris of a temple transformed into a church, and later on into a mosque. And the sublime column, 66 ft. 6 ins. high, standing in the midst of the plain not far from the village of

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(1) Samuel VIII. 8.

Ya'at, has it no connection with the gods of Baalbeck? The marble or bronze inscription that was on the columns, fell a long time ago.

On the border of Mt. Lebanon, near the village of Bteddar, the Maronite (a sect of Catholics in the Lebanon) monks have erected the Convent of Mar Nourah on the ruins of a temple and then a Byzantine church having three naves. The ruins and the profane and sacred inscriptions can be seen in abundance in the surroundings. They can be seen on the way to Lake Yammouneh and its temple; on the way to the temple of Afka, famous for its dishonouring turpitude of an infamous worship; on the way from Baalbeck to Jebeil (Byblos), where a cutting in the rocks of Akoura bears in superb characters this inscription: IMP. DOMITIANI AUG. S. V. T.

Let us remain at the eastern foot of the Lebanon, and descend to the south. On the top of a rock, with a head of the rock in the plain, is still a small Roman temple, simple and conventional. It is surrounded by a sacred precinct of large stones. A chapel was built near-by, and the mountain is still a place of pilgrimage for the Christians of the village of Shelifa, although the sanctuary has crumbled away.

In the little Metwali village of Houchbai, three-quarters of an hour before getting to the curve formed by the high-road of Zahle in crossing the

plain, we find again a reminder of the idol of Baalbeck.

A semi-circular vault sheltering the basin of a source of water, bears in nice characters on the inside face of the arcade the following inscription: Iovi Optimo Maximo Heliopolitano Quintus Barbius Refus — to Jupiter the very good, supreme in rank, Heliopolitan Quintus Barbius Rufus.

Finally there is a series of three temples to the right of the road near Zahle: Kasr Neba, Husn Niha, and Niha. These are small replicas of the temples of the Acropolis, and are, like them, built of huge stones. If the gallery of the outside columns was not missing, it could be said that they are the facsimile of the temple of Bacchus. They have the same decorations, the same subterranean chambers underneath the sanctuary, the same flight of steps and the same inscription of the winged genii and the eagle.

Of Kasr Neba there remains only a raised basement. The temple of Husn Niha is the vastest and the least ruinous. That of Niha is the most interesting owing to the magnificent inscriptions it bears.

A votary altar discovered in 1893 in the ground facing the temple, informs us that it was consecrated to the Syrian god Hadaranis; and that the spirit of darkness, always desirous to imitate the spirit of light, made himself to be honoured by the sacrifice

of penitant virgins. The following inscription with a bas-relief representing the sacrifice of a bull can be seen on one of the sides of the altar.

HOCMAEA, VIRGO DEI HADARANIS, QUIA ANNIS XX PANEM NON EDIT (sic) JUSSU IPSIUS DEI, Votum Libenti Animo Solvit. « Hocmy, virgin consecrated to the god Hadaranis in memory of her not having eaten bread for twenty years by order of the same god, voluntarily acquits herself of her vow ».

On another face is the next inscription : DEO HADRANI HOCHMAEA Votum Solvit. « Hocmy acquits herself of her vow to the god Hadranis ». Beneath is the head of a virgin, undoubtedly the portrait of Hocmy.

I do not known if there exists any other monument of a virgin condemned to fast for such a long period by order of antique Pagan gods.

The Romans extended and propagated the worship of the Heliopolitan Jupiter far beyond Cœle-Syria. Was there not found in Beyrout, in digging the foundations for the institution intended for the Sisters of Charity, in the middle of a temple, a votary altar with this inscription : Iovi Optimo Maximo Heliopolitano T. PONTIUS MAXIMUS Q. F. PROTOCLETUS Votum Libenti Animo Solvit ?

The stone is now the pedestal of the statue of S[t] Vincent de Paul in one of the courts of the said institution.

THE END.



